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Made in Germany: Integration as Inside Joke in the Ethno-comedy of Kaya Yanar and Bülent Ceylan

Kathrin Bower

ABSTRACT

As the largest “foreign” population in Germany, Turkish immigrants have been the primary target for concerns about integration and the impact of immigration on German culture. Since the founding of the first Turkish German cabaret in 1985 by Şinasi Dikmen and Muhsin Omurca, the misconceptions and one-sided expectations associated with integration have been played, parodied, and satirized by Turkish German performers. As producers of contemporary ethno-comedy, Kaya Yanar and Bülent Ceylan appeal to mass audiences with a new approach, inverting questions of integration by creating communities through laughter in which audiences are at once in on the joke and its object.

“Those who are unable to laugh at themselves are not integrated.”¹

—Bülent Ceylan

Conflicting Perspectives on Immigration and Integration

West Germany’s ambiguous immigration policies after the first contracts were signed to hire guest workers in the 1950s and 1960s contributed to the official position under the Kohl administration that the Federal Republic was not a land of immigration. The revisions to German naturalization law in 1999 brought about an immigration policy shift as well as an accompanying shift in perceptions of immigrants and their offspring from *Ausländer* (foreigners) to those with “migrant background.” As of 2011, the German Bureau of Statistics classified 19.5% of the total population as persons of migrant background, with the largest group coming from Turkey (approximately three million). According to the Bureau’s definition, people of migrant background are those who have migrated to Germany since 1950 and their offspring.² This change

in nomenclature is the latest in a series of terms including “foreigners” and “foreign fellow citizens” and reflects a dramatic transformation in attitudes and tone since the 1980s, when the West German government was determined to cut the immigrant population by half and insisted on unconditional assimilation for immigrants who remained in Germany.³

After a wave of xenophobia and nationalism in the 1990s following unification, the discourse on immigration moved from assimilation to integration. Chancellor Angela Merkel held the first integration summit in 2006. Merkel’s sixth summit in May 2013 focused on access to jobs for migrants and those of migrant background in Germany as well as recruitment of qualified professionals from other countries. People of migrant background continue to be at a disadvantage in the German job market and constitute the largest percentage of unemployed.⁴ In 2010, Thilo Sarrazin, former senator of finance and board member of Germany’s central bank published an enormously profitable and controversial book, *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (Germany does away with itself), in which he revived arguments and fears harkening back to the Heidelberger Manifest of 1981 that Germans were becoming a minority in their own country, which was being taken over by hordes of fertile and mentally deficient foreigners.⁵ Sarrazin’s vitriol and paranoia were directed primarily at Muslims, who in his analysis were conflated with Turks or those of Turkish migrant background. Sarrazin’s book sold millions of copies and has had a powerful effect on integration debates in Germany. Despite the many success stories among Germans of Turkish background and their increasing presence in politics and the media, both the Sarrazin controversy and the 2012 statistics from the German federal employment agency⁶ reveal that there is still a long way to go to establish a social environment where integration is not perceived primarily as a policy issue to be regulated by the government using standards that continue to enforce hierarchies of belonging instead of breaking them down.

Ethnicity and Ethno-comedy

Defining integration in relation to ethnicity and cultural identity has become almost as elusive as resolving the social problems associated with all three concepts in a society caught between the conflicting demands of national and postnational realities. In an essay entitled “War and Peace in Modernity: Reflections on the German-Turkish Future,” Zafer Şenocak observed that the prerequisite for successful integration is the recognition of complexity rather than insistence on homogeneity.⁷ His point has been echoed and varied by others, such as Dilek Zaptçioğlu and Mark Terkessidis. For Zaptçioğlu, integration can only succeed if a society acknowledges that it is already pluralistic and multicultural.⁸ Although Terkessidis objects to the term integration, he too insists that social equity will remain a fantasy until German politicians abandon the erroneous assumption that native Germans are the norm and instead adopt a

more differentiated view of their citizenry.⁹ One of the obstacles to achieving this pluralistic view is an essentialist understanding of ethnicity and cultural identity as fixed positions. In his book *Ethnicities and Global Multiculture*, Jan Piederse suggests that we should divert our attention from ethnicity and identity and think in terms of identification, which better reflects the fluidity and mobility of actual human interaction and behavior.¹⁰ For Piederse, ethnicity is an “unstable category” because the degree of ethnic identification depends on the social situation.¹¹ Umut Erel argues that ethnic identification is determined by social relations and that no individual can freely choose his or her identity but is instead “ethnicized” by society.¹²

In the discussion to follow, I will investigate how the constructed nature of ethnicity and its relationship to integration is performed in Turkish German comedy, specifically the ethno-comedy of Kaya Yanar and Bülent Ceylan, and explore how these two comedians harness cultural and ethnic stereotypes to create a community of spectators from diverse backgrounds who are all in on the joke. Using a combination of visual and discourse analysis indebted to earlier scholarship by Katrin Sieg on ethnic drag, Deniz Göktürk on ethnic film comedy, Graeme Dunphy and Rainer Emig on comedy in transcultural perspective, and Erol Boran, Maha El Hissy, and Helga Kotthoff on Turkish German cabaret, comedy, and film, I will attempt to answer the question whether the intersection of spectatorship and performance in Kaya Yanar’s and Bülent Ceylan’s programs contributes to the recognition and embrace of plurality and multiplicity or whether their dependence on stereotypes and cultural clichés serves to reinforce rather than unseat ideas of cultural difference. In the process I will look at how they juxtapose gestures of inclusion and exclusion in their use of self-ethnicization, drag, impersonation, linguistic imitation, and regional dialect. Before examining Yanar’s and Ceylan’s comic achievements, however, it is first necessary to situate their performance style in the context of Turkish German comedy.

Turkish German comedy grew out of Turkish German cabaret, which originated in Ulm with Şinasi Dikmen’s and Muhsin Omurca’s *Knobi Bonbon* in 1985. Dikmen and Omurca, who were both guest workers from Turkey, focused on discrimination, integration, and ethnic and cultural stereotypes in Turkish German relations in their programs and were awarded the German cabaret prize in 1987 in recognition of their prowess as performers. After twelve years of working together, Dikmen and Omurca parted ways in 1997 and went on to develop solo stage shows. Dikmen’s and Omurca’s success opened the field for other Turkish German cabaretists and comedians by the mid-1990s, which also witnessed a boom in German comedy. For my purposes, cabaret is characterized by a satirical tone and frequently has a political agenda, whereas comedy largely steers clear of politics and privileges entertainment over critique. Comedy neither assumes nor requires politically informed spectators, whereas the cabaret audience is expected to have some knowledge of contemporary politics in order to follow the program.

Among the younger generation of cabaretists, Django Asül from Deggendorf in Lower Bavaria has become known for his biting political humor and the calculated incongruity between his distinctively Bavarian dialect and his migrant background. This incongruity was further intensified by the fact that Asül was born in Deggendorf but retained a Turkish passport until 2011. Asül has produced five solo programs since his debut in 1996 and has also made numerous appearances on cabaret and comedy programs on both public and private German TV channels. Serdar Somuncu was born in Istanbul and immigrated to Germany with his parents as a young child. He grew up in Neuss, studied music and theater in Maastricht and Wuppertal, and was the founding director of the Neusser Kammerensemble. In 1996, Somuncu caused a media sensation by going on tour with readings from Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and has since made a name for himself as one of Germany's most provocative and critical voices of transnational satire.¹³ Known by his fans as the *Hassias* (the hate messiah), Somuncu has constructed a stage persona notorious for his politically incorrect fulminations against any and all groups. With his precise diction, capacious knowledge of political and popular culture, and rapid fire eloquence, Somuncu is a formidable opponent on the German talk show circuit, where he is frequently called upon to address issues affecting Turkish German relations. Fatih Çevikkollu was born in Cologne to Turkish parents and infuses his programs with a political and satirical tone to highlight and critique the absurdities and misperceptions surrounding cultural identifications. After numerous appearances on cabaret and stand-up stages and a run as Murat in the TV sitcom *Alles Atze*, Çevikkollu launched his first solo tour in 2005 with *Fatihland*. Subsequent tours have continued the playful punning of his name in conjunction with national identity, paternalism, and Christianity in *Komm zu Fatih* and *Fatih unser*.

While Asül, Somuncu, and Çevikkollu combine elements of political satire, cabaret, theater, and comedy in their performances, Kaya Yanar, Bülent Ceylan, and Murat Topal rely on stand-up as their primary comedic form and exemplify the style of ethno-comedy that emerged from the comedy wave of the 1990s.¹⁴ Yanar was born in Frankfurt to Turkish immigrant parents and had dreams of becoming a comedian already in high school. Unlike Asül, Somuncu, and Çevikkollu, Yanar does not speak Turkish, but he is an accomplished mimic adept at approximating a variety of languages and accents. After a stint of appearances on stand-up comedy stages, Yanar was "discovered" by the private TV channel SAT.1, which took a chance on giving him his own show in 2001. The result was the wildly popular *Was guckst Du?* that ran from 2001 to 2005 and was watched by some four million viewers. In its first year, *Was guckst Du?* was awarded both the German comedy prize and the German television prize for best comedy show. Since then, Yanar has toured with five solo programs, *Suchst Du?*, *Made in Germany*, *Live und unzensiert*, *All inclusive* and *Around the*

World. He performs for large crowds and regales audiences with tales of his travels, his childhood experiences, and his impressions of other cultures and peoples.

Like Yanar, Bülent Ceylan has established himself as one of the most popular comedians in Germany. Born in Mannheim to a Turkish immigrant father and a native German mother, Ceylan plays on his half-Turkish identity and his fierce affinity with the regional Kurpfälzer dialect. Like Yanar, Ceylan never learned to speak Turkish. In 2000, Ceylan launched his first solo program and has produced a new program about every two years since then with titles reflecting his love of word play: *Döner for one*, *Halb getürkt*, *Kebabbel net*, *Ganz schön turbülent*, *Wilde Kreatürken*, and *Haardrock*. After a decade of performing live comedy shows, Ceylan received the German comedy prize for best newcomer in 2009. In 2011, he was given his own slot on the private TV station RTL for *Die Bülent Ceylan Show*. The show quickly became a hit and entered its fourth season in 2013. Having reached new heights of popularity, Ceylan was awarded the German comedy prize for best comedian in 2011 and in 2012 received the prize for best live act, wresting it away from record-holding comedian Mario Barth.¹⁵ With his signature waist-length hair and headbanger opening routine, Ceylan is the heavy metal rocker of the German comedy scene.¹⁶ During his *Wilde Kreatürken* stadium tour in 2012, Ceylan demonstrated his rock star appeal, performing to sell-out crowds in stadiums seating 50,000.

Murat Topal, like Ceylan, is the son of a Turkish father and a German mother. Born and raised in the Neukölln district of Berlin, Topal is proficient in both German and Turkish and first pursued a career as a policeman. After serving for nearly ten years as a cop in Kreuzberg while experimenting with stand-up comedy on the side, Topal opted to quit the force for the stage in 2007. Topal has developed three solo programs since 2005 and had a short run as the star of a TV comedy show, *Spezialeinsatz*, in 2011. Topal draws much of the material for his comedy programs from his experiences as a police officer of migrant background in the largely Turkish district of Kreuzberg and has also been active in community youth projects to encourage cross-cultural understanding. In his more recent programs, he has shifted his focus to the trials and tribulations of being a husband, father, and homeowner.

Although all of the cabaretists and comedians mentioned above have contributed to the discourse of integration in Germany, I have chosen to focus on Kaya Yanar and Bülent Ceylan because of their appeal to mass audiences. Yanar and Ceylan offer a style of comedy that renders the “other” or the “stranger” comical and ordinary and thus unthreatening while also incorporating the strangeness of the familiar by showcasing the comic foibles and diversity of the indigenous population. Yanar and Ceylan utilize a common strategy of ethnic impersonation, playing on stereotypes and clichés in multiple variations, thereby complicating and disarming the concept of an imagined “ethnic” other as “non-German.” The characters they create embrace

an array of nationalities and personalities, and the channeling of these personalities through the figure of the comedian, himself a character in the performance, reveals the exoticism of the local as well as the familiarity of the exotic. Their appeal is not to the intellect, but to the comic effects of masquerade and impersonation. Their humor is neither caustic nor dangerous and they work within the bounds of recognizable clichés and stereotypes. In a sense they perform ethnic acts as a means to show how integrated and “German” they are, even as their chameleon antics across cultures and ethnicities raise questions about the mutability and authenticity of ethnic identities and identifications.

Degrees of Drag in Ethno-comedy

Ethno-comedy can be broadly defined as comedy about questions of ethnicity and multiculturalism that is performed by actors who may or may not be of migrant background.¹⁷ In an article entitled “Strangers in Disguise: Role-Play beyond Identity Politics in Anarchic Film Comedy,” Deniz Göktürk looks back to ethnic acts in variety shows and jokes in the early twentieth century that focused on linguistic misunderstandings and traces the development of ethnic comedy using cinematic examples from the Marx brothers’ *Monkey Business* to Kutlucan’s *Ich Chef Du Turnschuh*. Göktürk argues that contemporary ethnic comedy plays with assumptions of victimization and marginalization in migrant experience using “strategies of humor and irony, carnival and anarchy, distancing and reversal, masquerade and mutual mimicry, delusion and role-play.”¹⁸ She presents a vision of the future in which “mutual mimicry” becomes the norm in a progression toward “polycentric multiculturalism” in a society that no longer thinks in terms of cultural divisions and hierarchies of dominant and minority cultures.¹⁹ The types of performed ethnicity characteristic of the vaudeville stage and variété have been updated and revised in contemporary ethno-comedy: imitation, impersonation, and role-play were all key features in earlier stage shows and are standard features in both Kaya Yanar’s and Bülent Ceylan’s programs. Yet whereas ethnicity was shown to be a limitation in earlier comedy, Yanar and Ceylan celebrate diversity and hybridity as a value in contemporary German society. Although they ironize and ridicule ethnic stereotypes and clichés (including stereotypes about Germans), they also repeatedly affirm ethnic difference by insisting on categorization, even if the categories persistently shift and collide: Ceylan refers to himself ironically as the “Türk” but also relentlessly lays claim to his identity as a “Monnheima” (Mannheimer); Yanar includes himself alternately in the collective of “wir Türken” (we Turks) and “wir Deutschen” (we Germans) without leaving the binary “wir Türken” / “ihr Deutschen” (you Germans) behind. The question is whether this manipulation of categories is a deliberate attempt to disturb monolithic conceptions of ethnicity or rather a pragmatic act of preserving terminology in order to reach a mass audience.

By placing the German Turk or Turkish German or *Teuto-Türke* (Teutonic Turk) at

center stage, Yanar and Ceylan engage in acts of “performing back” as well as reversals of what Göktürk calls “the ethnographic gaze.”²⁰ For Göktürk, the immigrant performer who has mastered the norms can take control of and reconfigure the rules: “It is at this point that the ethnographic gaze can be turned around, that supposedly settled non-immigrants can be mocked and unsettled, and themselves be incorporated into somebody else’s game.”²¹ Like Göktürk, Helga Kotthoff supports the view that comedy by performers of migrant background can contribute to changes in self-perception among the native Germans by making the migrant perspective the point of reference.²² Erol Boran suggests that by creating their own forms of the stereotypes associated with a variety of ethnicities, Turkish, German, and beyond, Turkish German comedians and cabaretists do not cater to audience expectations but rather control them.²³ I would argue, however, that the distinction between catering to and controlling is not always that clear. In the case of Yanar and Ceylan, who represent second-generation migrants or Germans of migrant background, both the migrant and the ethnic German are fodder for comedy filtered through a kind of hybrid gaze. Both comedians like to make jokes about their fathers, particularly their fathers’ imperfect command of the German language. At the same time, they shine light on the arrogance, pride, and pettiness of ethnic Germans.

The material that works best for a diverse audience derives from and is dependent on familiar stereotypes and clichés, and the comedian’s popularity in part hinges on his or her ability to ridicule the ethnic stereotypes without ridiculing the ethnic groups associated with them. As Christiane Schlöte has noted in an article comparing ethnic TV comedies in Britain and Germany, the comedians in these shows and their material “are taken as representative of very heterogeneous and highly stratified cultural segments of society. They are not only expected to redeem these groups’ former enforced invisibilities, but also to correct any current stereotyped representations.”²⁴ For this reason, televised ethnic comedies are subject to scrutiny by the groups represented as well as by the mainstream. The comedians must struggle with the fact that “their desire to comply with the expectations of marginalized and mainstream audiences requires continuous efforts to entertain both without offending either.”²⁵

The potential for offense is directly related to the type and style of impersonation, the perceived ethnicity of the performer, and the stereotype on display. In *Ethnic Drag: Performing Race, Nation, Sexuality in West Germany*, Katrin Sieg coins the term “ethnic drag” to designate a range of ethnic impersonations from mimicry to masquerade, taking care not to suggest any binary opposition between mimesis and masquerade that would categorize the former as affirmative and the latter subversive.²⁶ Kader Konuk has argued that drag itself is not automatically subversive; rather the value of drag lies in its capacity to draw our attention to the ambivalence of the performance and how power relations both outside and within the performance affect our response.²⁷ If drag is to some extent a caricature of a caricature and ethnic drag

thus a self-conscious caricature of ethnic stereotypes, it can lead to what Sieg calls “a counteranthropology of sorts,” or a destabilization of presumed hierarchies of difference.²⁸ Yanar’s and Ceylan’s incorporation of ethnic drag in their routines does not have an explicitly subversive purpose, although it is aimed at deflating anxiety and revealing the shared humanity behind the mask of cultural clichés.

Creating Community through Humor

Through oscillating self-designations and identifications that ally them with Germans, Turks, and humanity in general, Yanar and Ceylan destabilize the basis for ethnic drag even as they perform it. The play with and within ethnicity in ethnic drag reveals its mimetic and parodic capacity: when the “ethnic” plays an “ethnic” role it can be perceived as mimetic and thus authentic, or as parodic and thus a critique of stereotyped views of the “ethnic” other. The spectators who recognize the parody behind the ethnic drag in such cases are in on the joke, whereas those who expect or see authenticity in the performance are the dupes.²⁹ In Sieg’s reading of plays by Spiderwoman and by Emine Sevgi Özdamar, it is the simultaneity of both elements—the mimetic and the parodic—that contributes to a “critical undoing of mimesis.”³⁰ In effect, both Yanar and Ceylan utilize techniques combining mimesis and parody whereby they alternately include and exclude segments of their diverse audiences, creating temporary divisions that are overcome in the context of shared laughter. The overall program then generates a set of spectators who have become part of and party to the inside joke: they are made to feel special because they “get it” but also because they can take it.

The premise behind Yanar’s *Was guckst du?* show was to make gentle fun of a multitude of groups including the presumptively hegemonic “German ethnics.” In sketches including ethnic German characters, the “German” male was played by Keirut Wenzel, an ethnic German actor from Bonn, while Yanar portrayed the ethnic “other.” *Was guckst Du?* featured a series of characters representing different ethnic types that were clearly parodies of corresponding cultural stereotypes: among the most popular were Francesco, the Italian with Casanova fantasies that invariably flopped; Ranjid, the naïf from India with his cow Benytha; and Hakan, the Turkish German bouncer with trademark long hair, perpetual sneer, and bomber jacket. Yanar developed signature facial expressions to evoke specific characters: Francesco sports a thin mustache and knowing leer that suggests sexual prowess and serves as an ironic contrast to his bungled pick up attempts; Ranjid has the wide-eyed innocence and open mouth that reinforces his naïve perspective and world view; and Hakan has his upper lip curled in an aggressive sneer that at once indicates his contempt and his *Kanak* perspective.³¹ Hakan’s favorite expression is “hier kommst du nit rein” (you’re not coming in here) reflecting his power as a bouncer to control access as well as reverse categories of inside and outside. His ability to deny entry and his

apparently arbitrary but definitive decisions about who is acceptable and who is not, particularly “German” supplicants who are too uptight to be cool enough for his club, offer a different perception of the dynamic of acceptance, asylum, and naturalization controlled by the state apparatus.

After the Greeks complained that they were being left out, Yanar created several Greek characters for the show, including a Greek restaurant owner.³² In one Greek restaurant sketch, Yanar portrays the obsequious Greek waiter to Wenzel’s arrogant and pedantic German patron.³³ When the German patron complains that his salad is not Greek because it lacks feta cheese, the waiter brings a shot of Ouzo to calm him down. Taking the German literally in his insistence that Greek means with feta cheese, the waiter authenticates the Ouzo by dropping a cube of cheese into the glass.³⁴ The Greek waiter who initially appeared to be the victim of the German patron’s orientalist arrogance reverses the situation in the end by using the German’s alleged cultural superiority to get the better of him. In the sketch, the audience is able to identify with two positions and recognize the elements of parody in each. The cultural stereotypes are evident and the breadth and inclusivity of the groups being parodied creates an environment where everyone sees humor in how they are perceived by others. They recognize themselves in the performances, yet are also able to distinguish themselves from the performed.

Bülent Ceylan’s success as a live-act performer rests in his ability to elicit a variety of distinct characters with a minimum of props and accessories. Over the years he has developed a repertoire representing different sociocultural specimens including Turkish Germans and ethnic Germans. Aslan is the Turkish German grocer with a skullcap and prayer beads whom Ceylan portrays with a trace of a squint and syntactically broken German. Hasan tries to come across as a Turkish German macho with his muscle-bound stance, heavy chain necklace, pursed lips and trademark *Türken-deutsch* (Turkish German) expressions infused with Mannheimer dialect, but Ceylan reveals the vulnerable core behind the bluster. Ceylan claims that his Hasan character is there because the “Germans” expect it, but at the same time he characterizes Hasan as an “Ethno-Mannheimer Türk.”³⁵ The attribution of an ethnicity to Mannheim not only calls attention to the eccentricities of the local and adds a domestic dimension to the concept of integration, it also expands conventional understandings of ethnicity as difference in relation to a homogeneous dominant culture.

The expansion of ethnicity to encompass Mannheim enables Ceylan to categorize the cultural situation in Mannheim itself as ethno-comedy, making him at once a kind of master of ceremonies for a parade of “typical” local characters and the embodiment of integration as the “Turkish” informant educating the “Germans” about their own local culture. Ceylan’s ethnic German “regulars” include the mentally challenged Harald, for whom zipping up his jacket is always the first obstacle; the aggressive and racist custodian Mompfred with his misbuttoned coat and pipe wrench; and

the pretentious and politically incorrect Anneliese, owner of an exclusive furrier's shop, with her faux mink coat, leopard skin purse, and matching glasses. In his live programs and on his TV show, Ceylan weaves together sketches using these invented characters and his stage persona as Bülent Ceylan. When he was asked in an interview if Bülent Ceylan is a role, Ceylan responded that he found it very hard to play himself on stage, an answer that reveals the disjunction and conflation of actor and performance.³⁶ Although Erving Goffman was among the first to articulate how our self-presentation in social interactions is always an act, there is a difference between self-representation in an everyday setting and representing oneself on stage. Yet the conflation of what I would call the actor's civilian identity and the actor on stage is a common tendency among audiences, made more complex as well as more probable by the inclusion of a diverse array of contrasting "other" characters in sketch comedy who serve to enhance the apparent normalcy and lack of artifice when the stage performer appears to be playing him or herself.

While Ceylan relies in part on costume and accessories to distinguish the characters he portrays, alterations in his voice, gestures, and facial expression are sufficient to evoke a specific character for audiences familiar with his programs. In his live shows, Kaya Yanar eschews costume entirely and employs the recognizable voices, gestures, and facial expressions (achieved by manipulating his elastic mouth and prominent eyes) he has developed for each character to summon their presence. Both Ceylan and Yanar play with the presumptions of difference and sameness in the relationship between character and performer. In a 2006 performance of *Halb getürkt* in Mannheim, Ceylan opened the show with a warm-up act by the Finnish DJ Lassa Hoppsen. After concluding his act with the song "Alles okay in Helsinki," Hoppsen turned his head toward backstage and announced: "Hey Türkei, kannst kommen, sind warm" (Hey Turk, can come, are warm).³⁷ Anyone familiar with Ceylan would immediately recognize his face behind Lassa Hoppsen's dark sunglasses and his hair under the white fur cap. The inclusion of a warm-up act for the main attraction performed by the comedian whose show the audience has come to see further complicates the relationship between person, comedian, and character. While this conceit is certainly not Ceylan's invention, his incorporation of Lassa Hoppsen's performance serves as a parody of the warm-up or opening act even as it sets the stage for the show's focus on masquerade. The pretension to difference implied by Lassa Hoppsen's address to the supposedly unseen, backstage Ceylan is an inside joke between Ceylan and the fans in the audience who are fully aware that Ceylan is channeling the Hoppsen persona. Lassa Hoppsen's stage name further underscores the element of mutual understanding requisite to being in on the joke: it appears to be foreign but is actually German: "Lass sie hoppsen" (let them dance).

Kaya Yanar makes a similar appeal to the audience's inside knowledge in a 2009 performance of *Live und unzensiert* in Stuttgart. After announcing that his two

most popular characters from *Was guckst du?*—Hakan and Ranjid—would not be appearing on the show and explaining to the audience how long it takes for him to transform from the Turkish German Kaya into the Hindu Ranjid because of all the makeup that needs to be applied, Yanar easily slips into Ranjid’s character merely by changing his voice and facial expression. The contrast between the labor alluded to in the utterance and the ease of the performative masquerade through speech generates a contradiction that questions the primacy of visual cues associated with ethnic identities while also subverting assumptions of homogeneous subjectivity. Yanar manipulates these assumptions even further when he quips: “Für alle, die es nicht wissen, bin ich Hakan und Ranjid” (for all who do not know, I am Hakan and Ranjid) to which the audience laughs and applauds.³⁸

Yanar’s capacity to effortlessly evoke Ranjid through voice and facial expressions serves as the segue to his admission to the audience that Ranjid’s character sometimes presents itself spontaneously and has infiltrated his “real” personality. Bülent Ceylan alludes to a similar phenomenon by referring to himself as a “Schizo-Türke” (schizoid Turk) and plays on this association by including musical numbers in his programs where he channels the voices of all of his characters in a single song while also playing “himself.”³⁹ Yanar and Ceylan foreground the idea of cultural schizophrenia, not as a curse but rather as the driver for their comic energy and a platform for their comedic interventions in the prejudices and assumptions about “migrant background.” In the process, they lampoon the idea that they are adrift and unsure of their identities by embracing fluidity and mutability as the essence of their being. Again, the play with the boundaries between character and actor serves as a joke shared between audience and performer. The question is whether this wink of understanding that the performer is at once distinct from and conflated with the characters he performs complicates or confuses audience perceptions of ethnicity and ethnic identification.

Halb getürkt: Commodifying Ethnicity, Playing with Identity

In the introduction to *Hybrid Humour: Comedy in Transnational Perspective*, Graeme Dunphy and Rainer Emig applaud migrant comedians who are able to “merge their cultures into a personal cultural mélange and celebrate hybridity as their actual identity.”⁴⁰ Following Homi Bhabha, Dunphy and Emig argue that identity is a “process” and a “negotiation” in which the perceived dominant group and the perceived subordinate group stand in a relation of mutual influence.⁴¹ As has been shown above, Yanar and Ceylan play with the conflation of their identities as performers and the characters they perform. They “appear” to be “themselves” but fluidly shift between characters and revert back to “themselves” to include allegedly authentic anecdotes from their “real” experiences, thus blurring the lines between performance and authenticity.

The origins of the German verb “türken” meaning to fake or falsify can be traced

back to an eighteenth-century game featuring an automaton dressed as a Turk who appeared to be able to play chess but was in fact operated by a real person. The chess skills of this “Schachtürke” (chess Turk) were therefore the result of trickery or a “getürkte” performance.⁴² Graeme Dunphy mentions other possible origins for the verb, including ruses used in the Ottoman wars of the sixteenth century, but notes that all the origin stories indicate that the falsification or trickery “was not perpetrated by Turks but by Germans manipulating an illusion of Turkishness.”⁴³ In other words, the term’s negative connotations stem from cultural projections that deflect or deny the origins of the deceit. For that reason, “türken” has become irresistible material for Turkish German comedians and satirists who have appropriated the word to make statements on everything from hybridity to the deceptions perpetrated by cultural hegemony to the project and process of integration. The play with multivalence is evident in titles such as Osman Engin’s collection of satirical stories *Alles getürkt* (1992), Murat Topal’s first solo program, *Getürkte Fälle. Ein Cop packt aus* (2005), and Bülent Ceylan’s *Halb getürkt* (2006) as well as in scholarship on Turkish German cultural production, such as Ernst Karpf, Doron Kiesel and Karsten Visarius’s edited volume “*Getürkte Bilder.*” *Zur Inszenierung des Fremden im Film* (1995) and Maha El Hissy’s *Getürkte Türken. Karnevaleske Stilmittel im Theater, Kabarett und Film deutsch-türkischer Künstlerinnen und Künstler* (2012).

Although Ceylan and Yanar both have Turkish backgrounds, their “getürkte” performances are in many respects affirmations of their Germanness. Neither comedian speaks Turkish, a lack that could be seen to undermine their bona fides as “true” Turks. In the bonus material to Yanar’s *Made in Germany* DVD, video footage of the comedian’s interaction with Turks in Istanbul reveals how he emphasizes his difference from the natives by affecting “German” arrogance when encountering the cultural “other.”⁴⁴ Talking to the camera, Yanar makes jokes about the Turkish language and his own ignorance of Istanbul. As he walks among the vendors in the Grand Bazaar he seems to take delight in making fun of them by saying things in German that they do not understand. In effect, his presence in Turkey underscores his German biography rather than his affinity or association with Turkish culture. This impression is strengthened by the fact that the exclusive audience for Yanar’s stage performance in Istanbul, held in the Grand Bazaar at the invitation of the German general consul, consists of German speakers who have imported their own Turkish German comedian to perform German comedy about Turkish German relations in one of Istanbul’s prime tourist attractions.

While Yanar seems to ally himself with his German audience by poking fun at the “real Turks” in Turkey and perhaps even exaggerating his difference from them, Ceylan prefers to magnify and complicate the idea of imitation and masquerade by adding multiple layers. Ceylan uses his mixed identity as a source of comedy but also highlights the patchwork identity he has grown up with—a potpourri of regional

custom, Christian tradition, and Turkish expectation—as well as the heterogeneous nature of culture itself. He seems to maintain a distinction between Turks and Germans as categories, but regards himself as a hybrid, “halb getürkt,” who will eat a half Schnitzel but not a whole one out of deference to his Turkish roots.⁴⁵ This joke makes light of the difference in dietary laws and practices between Muslims and non-Muslims while foregrounding Ceylan’s sense of cultural mobility. The marketing of identity as a kind of self-promoted otherness in which the migrants or those of migrant background transform their culture into capital is a manipulation and commodification of ethnicities that Ceylan acknowledges and lampoons in his shows, ironizing the act of capitalizing on stereotypes even as he performs them.

Ceylan uses the term “halb getürkt” to emphasize and caricature his mixed descent but teasingly ascribes more monolithic views on ethnicity to his “German” spectators, who he claims have come only to see the Turk “schwitzen und verrecken” (sweat and croak). This playful approach to ethnic categorization, cultural stereotypes, and hybridity is evident in the opening of every episode of his RTL comedy show, which features him doing a hip-shaking version of an orientalized belly dance and then loosening his hair for a head-banging routine affirming his hard rock affinities. Ceylan’s antic style and affection for multiple layers is amply illustrated in a scene from the first episode of the *Bülent Ceylan Show* from its second season. In this segment, Ceylan takes the idea of Turkish identity, performance, and masquerade to a new level by introducing a Turkish Elvis impersonator, Nevrez Caliskan, who addresses him in Turkish and sings popular Presley tunes in Turkish.⁴⁶ Ceylan’s special guest for the show is multiethnic singer Xavier Naidoo, who like Ceylan was born and raised in Mannheim.⁴⁷ When Ceylan expresses incomprehension about what the Turkish Elvis is saying, he turns to Naidoo who acts as if he understands and translates for Ceylan. The fact that Caliskan is the son of Turkish migrants and grew up in Germany adds another layer of masquerade and deception to the many already present: he is performing as the Turkish Elvis who sings in English and Turkish without revealing the fact that he can speak fluent German on a German comedy show hosted by a Turkish German who speaks no Turkish. The show concludes with a dance number featuring Ceylan and Naidoo wearing outfits reflecting youth fashion of the American 1950s complete with exaggerated pompadour hairstyles. They exuberantly dance the jitterbug with their female partners to the tune of Presley’s “Don’t be cruel” sung in Turkish in a raucous celebration of multicultural masquerade filtered through the legacy of impersonation associated with an iconic American pop star.⁴⁸

The joyful carnival of identity and masquerade evident in the Turkish Elvis dance number on the *Bülent Ceylan Show* encourages playful perceptions of cultural and ethnic identifications. In his *Halb getürkt* program, Ceylan’s introduction of Karl-Heinz Huck, a German “Hobby Indianer” who presents himself as the “Häuptling der Arsch-Pachen” (chief of the Ass-Paches), alludes to a more problematic history

of ethnic masquerade.⁴⁹ As Huck, Ceylan appears wearing a fur-trimmed vest, a headband with a feather stuck in the back and carrying a hand drum. He stands with his arms crossed and speaks with a voice reminiscent of the terse Indians in early Hollywood Westerns. Huck confides to the audience that he can speak normally, but that his Indian persona “kommt besser” (makes a better impression). This confession is yet another intriguing enactment of layering within ethnic masquerade: the Turkish German plays a German playing an Indian whose impersonation and motivation is an open secret. The idea that the Indian masquerade makes a better impression is a reference, whether neutral or critical, to the German fascination with Native Americans and the “Hobby Indianer” phenomenon that Sieg critiques in *Ethnic Drag*. In Sieg’s discussion of the hobbyist phenomenon, she makes a reference to Ward Churchill, an activist and writer who was surprised by the number of Germans who identified with or as Native Americans. Their reasoning, in Churchill’s account, was that they detested the idea of being Europeans and especially Germans.⁵⁰ This observation suggests that Karl-Heinz Huck’s admission that his Indian guise “kommt besser” represents a kind of German self-loathing usually associated with minorities as an effect of discrimination, here compounded by the burden of German history. Any assumption of possible German self-hatred, however, is neutralized by Ceylan’s designation of Huck as the chief of the “Arsch-Pachen,” implying that Huck’s masquerade and by extension the hobbyist phenomenon itself is a “Verarschung” (mockery), an act of appropriation that Sieg has labeled “cultural theft and ethnic chauvinism.”⁵¹

Turks vs. Osis

In 2010, Bülent Ceylan collaborated with Fatih Çevikkollu and Murat Topal on a comedy program entitled *Wir sprechen Deutsch! Türkischer Humor für alle* (We speak German! Turkish humor for everyone), a kind of multicultural outreach designed specifically for the eastern German states. The program title itself is a multivalent expression of the uneasy, even comic, relationship between Turkish and German in migrant society, where the “Turks” speak German and what is packaged as “Turkish” humor is in fact a performative synthesis of political cabaret, stand-up comedy, and ethnic masquerade that draws on German stage comedy traditions. The reference to speaking German in the program title is particularly apt for Ceylan, who is the only one of the trio who does not speak Turkish. Not only does Ceylan not speak Turkish, his comic role models are all recognized names in the German comedy scene: Heinz Erhardt, Rudi Carrell, and Michael Mittelmeier among others.⁵² While Ceylan had been wary of the former GDR prior to the “Wir sprechen Deutsch” tour, his foray into the east revealed that East Germans were also capable of laughing at themselves, and he now regularly appears in stadium-sized venues in eastern German cities such as Dresden, Cottbus, Leipzig, Magdeburg, and Erfurt.

Ceylan’s conquest of the east was preceded by the inclusion of “Osis” (East

Germans) as targets for humor in his comedy material. In a performance of his *Kebbabel net* program in Mannheim in 2007, Ceylan uses the figure of the Turkish grocer Aslan to foreground and parody negative attitudes toward “Ossis” and the hierarchical thinking that produces them.⁵³ Ceylan portrays Aslan using visual cues reminiscent of Ferdinand Marian’s ethnic masquerade as Jud Süß in Veit Harlan’s 1940 film. The shrewd look evoked through the squinting eye and fixed gaze, in Aslan’s case coupled with a repetitive gesture of worrying the prayer beads in his right hand, gives the impression of a vendor trying to put something over on the client. In the *Kebbabel net* sketch, Ceylan employs Aslan to express the tensions between the Turkish minority and the East Germans and establishes a social hierarchy based on Aslan’s perspective. Aslan complains that his daughter’s boyfriend is not only a “Kartoffel” (slang for a German) but also an “Ossi,” a sure sign that Allah is testing him.⁵⁴ In his performance, Ceylan channels multiple linguistic registers in succession, moving from Aslan’s incorrect grammar and syntax to a Saxonian accent to imitate the East German boyfriend, Rüdiger.⁵⁵ Aslan not only objects to Rüdiger’s heritage, which he views as lower on the social ladder than that of Turkish immigrants, he also objects to Rüdiger’s name, which he dismisses as “komplett beschissen” (totally unacceptable), insisting that from now on he be called “Abdul.”⁵⁶

Aslan’s jokes about reunification and East Germans point to social conflicts in a humorous way that does not resolve them but makes them seem less threatening. When describing his dissatisfaction with his daughter’s choice, Aslan comments with exasperation “irgendwo ist eine Grenze—oder war . . .” (a play on words that combines the expression for drawing a line somewhere with the existence and subsequent disappearance of the border between the FRG and the GDR) and then reminds the audience: “Wir Türken, wir waren zuerst da!” (we Turks were here first)—which garners laughter from the crowd.⁵⁷ The joke hinges on the understanding that the “Ossi” is the other, subordinate to even subaltern Turks who were there “first” because of the coincidence of the work agreement with Turkey in 1961 and the construction of the Berlin Wall that same year. The negative attitude toward the “Ossi” expressed by a “Turkish” grocer allows the “German” audience to laugh about the strains of unification and its aftermath because they can temporarily take the side of the wily but sympathetic Aslan without admitting their own possible prejudices or insecurities.

“Ossi” jokes are also fair game among ethnic German comedians such as Michael Mittermeier, but Ceylan’s style of humor in the Aslan sketch reveals another facet in the perceptions of social division and hierarchy between eastern and western Germans.⁵⁸ Aslan’s contempt for Rüdiger stems from his own sense of being a stakeholder in the Federal Republic for a longer period of time. He sees his place on the social ladder as a function of first come, first served where East Germans are at the back of the line. At the same time, Aslan allies himself with the preunification Federal Republic against the East Germans, an act that undermines the assumptions of a

homogeneous culture or unified people. Aslan's comment about the primacy of the Turks over the "Ossis" shifts the onus of otherness onto the Germans by reordering the cultural hierarchy and undermining the imagined homogeneity and superiority of the *Volk*.

Made in Germany: Dialect and Cosmopolitanism in Ethno-comedy

In a *Spiegel* article entitled "Buntes Deutschland" from May 2012, Bülent Ceylan was hailed as the most humorous representative of integration in a country where nearly three million people are of Turkish heritage. The article goes on to commend Ceylan for his role as one of us, a role he plays for the Germans as well as for the Turks.⁵⁹ Although the article applauds the progress of integration, the categorical divisions between Germans and Turks persist at the level of language even as the idea of a migration society is supposed to break them down: "us" is still divided into distinctly ethnic categories. Ceylan's self-stylization as a loyal representative of the Mannheimer dialect and as a "Türkdeutscher" or "Schizo-Türke" is a synthetic approach to overcoming those categorical divisions or to divesting them of any hierarchical significance. Ceylan's focus on the local dialect not only serves to illustrate his integration but also functions as an expression of the distinction between assimilation and integration. In an essay on dialect use in popular culture, Katja Hanke notes that musicians, cabaret artists and comedians sometimes employ dialect "to stem the tide of High German" which some feel is less authentic than local speech.⁶⁰ In other words, loyalty to a regional or local dialect can be read as a gesture of resistance to assimilation represented by High German. From this perspective, Ceylan's ethnic German character Mompfred figures as a fierce opponent to assimilation, clearly articulated in his battle cry: "Hochdeutsch soll verrecke, der Dialekt lebe hoch!" (High German be damned, long live dialect!).⁶¹ Dialect comedy becomes a way of highlighting the comedian's belonging in a local context, while also accentuating his alterity: in Ceylan's case, he is one of "us" for the locals, but then doubly other to those outside of the region because of his status as a Mannheimer and a Turkish German.

The appeal to dialect in ethno-comedy turns a new page in the history of dialect comedy, where dialects were often used to represent groups targeted because of their difference from a perceived standard or norm. In ethno-comedy, dialect becomes the point of intersection of the familiar and the foreign. In *Getürkte Türken*, Maha El Hissy argues that dialect serves as a linguistic mask that actually reveals the internal inconsistencies and differences in ostensibly homogeneous national language.⁶² This linguistic mask in the form of the local dialect offers the performer a third position beyond Turkish or German, namely a regional identity that gives him/her an outsider's gaze when looking at Germany and the rest of the world.⁶³ The region becomes the place in between the imagined homogeneity of Turkish or German. For Helga Kotthoff this in-between is articulated with comic synthesis in Ceylan's program title *Kebabbel*

net, which combines the Turkish word “kebab” with the Mannheimer dialect term “babbeln” meaning to talk.⁶⁴ Here the talking Turk is not talking Turkish but rather a local dialect that simultaneously reflects his insider and outsider status.

For Kaya Yanar, it is not the local dialect that generates this third position, but rather the multiple nationalities of his characters and his own role as a Turkish German flaneur serve to merge and distinguish his perspective as insider and outsider. In a 2008 performance of his *Made in Germany* program in Frankfurt, Yanar appears dressed simply in black street clothes on a stage decorated with black, red, and gold stripes and introduces himself in his Ranjid voice. The apparent incongruence of voice, dress, name, and the ostentatious nationalism of the stage setting are part of Yanar’s project to destabilize categories of ethnicity and national identity as part of a running gag on integration. In the introductory part of the program, Yanar expresses his love for Frankfurt as a multicultural mecca where he grew up surrounded by Italians, Arabs, Turks, and Germans. Despite the real existing multicultural cohabitation in Frankfurt and elsewhere, Yanar points out that the media has yet to recognize the common denominator among all inhabitants. Yanar tells his audience how he is often asked whether he feels Turkish or German and that his response is that he most often feels like a human being.⁶⁵ This comment in all its simplicity is the overarching message behind Yanar’s frenetic send-ups of national character and cultural encounters. Yanar’s identifications are more cosmopolitan than Ceylan’s, evidenced by his predilection for travel and the range of his cultural imitations. At the same time, the *Made in Germany* program title and Yanar’s mock autobiography published in 2011 foreground his life and career as a cultural product and commodity while also emphasizing his successful integration.⁶⁶ Subsequent program titles such as *All Inclusive* and *Around the World* link commerce with tourism while also making humorous jabs at the disjunction between the objectives and realities of integration and globalization.

The playful engagement with ethnic categories is a key ingredient to the visual pleasure and humor in Yanar’s and Ceylan’s comedic performances. That some of their spectators may already have progressed beyond the brand of ethnic masquerade they have marketed so successfully is illustrated in an encounter between Ceylan and a member of the studio audience in the third episode of the second season of *Die Bülent Ceylan Show*. In response to Ceylan’s question whether there are Turks in the audience, several people identify themselves. One woman near the front row has a brief exchange with Ceylan about where her family is from. The woman is dressed in a manner that positions her as secular and modern and it comes out in the conversation that she does not have a secure command of the Turkish language. In reaction to Ceylan’s quip that he thought he was the one who could not speak Turkish, the woman replies that she is a “Hobby Türkin” (a hobbyist Turk), an expression that delights and surprises Ceylan.⁶⁷ The woman’s remark represents both the culmination and

overcoming of the aims of Ceylan's and Yanar's ethno-comedy. Her self-designation as a hobbyist Turk stands in sharp contrast to the "cultural theft" Ceylan parodies in his "Hobby Indianer" Karl-Heinz Huck sketch and reveals the dissolution of the divide between and within ethnic categories, transforming the essentializing constraints of ethnicity into performative freedom. It is in this atmosphere of performative freedom where ethnic identifications are recognized as constructs as well as a matter of choice that integration in all of its contested dimensions becomes an inside joke rather than a vehicle for exclusion, except for those who are unable to laugh at themselves.

Notes

1. "Wer nicht über sich selbst lachen kann, der ist nicht integriert." *Bülent Ceylan live!* (Sony Music Entertainment, 2009) DVD.
2. Statistisches Bundesamt, "Bevölkerung mit Migrationshintergrund 2011 um 216 000 Personen gestiegen," Press release 19 September 2012, https://www.destatis.de/DE/PresseService/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2012/09/PD12_326_122.html;jsessionid=B00EC6F7AEDFDC152C7407218BA4041B.cae3.
3. Rolf Meinhardt, "Pollacken, Itaker, Kanaken—Zur Leidensgeschichte der Fremden in Deutschland," in *Türken raus? oder Verteidigt den sozialen Frieden. Beiträge gegen die Ausländerfeindlichkeit*, ed. Rolf Meinhardt (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1984), 19.
4. "SPD kritisiert Merkmals Integrations-Show," 28 May 2013, <http://www.fr-online.de/politik/integrationsgipfel-spd-kritisiert-merkels-integrations-show-,1472596,22886776.html>. For a breakdown of unemployment statistics for those of migrant background based on the 2012 microcensus data, see the report *Arbeitslose mit Migrationshintergrund* released by the German federal employment agency: <http://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Statistischer-Content/Grundlagen/Methodenberichte/Generische-Publikationen/Methodenbericht-Arbeitslose-Migrationshintergrund-2012.pdf%20%0C>.
5. Thilo Sarrazin, *Deutschland schafft sich ab. Wie wir unser Land aufs Spiel setzen* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2010).
6. According to a report released in October 2012 by the German federal employment agency, 35% of the unemployed surveyed were of migrant background. *Methodenbericht. Arbeitslose mit Migrationshintergrund* (Nürnberg 2012): 20, <http://statistik.arbeitsagentur.de/Statistischer-Content/Grundlagen/Methodenberichte/Generische-Publikationen/Methodenbericht-Arbeitslose-Migrationshintergrund-2012.pdf%20%0C>.
7. Leslie Adelson, ed. *Atlas of a Tropical Germany: Essays on Politics and Culture, 1990–1998*, trans. Leslie Adelson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 93.
8. Dilek Zaptçioğlu, *Türken und Deutsche. Nachdenken über eine Freundschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Brandes & Apsel, 2005), 62.
9. Mark Terkessidis, *Interkultur* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010), 17.
10. Jan Piederse, *Ethnicities and Global Multiculture: Pants for an Octopus* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 32–33.
11. Piederse, *Ethnicities and Global Multiculture*, 38.
12. Umut Erel, "Grenzüberschreitungen und kulturelle Mischformen als antirassistischer Widerstand?," in *AußBrüche. Kulturelle Produktionen von Migrantinnen, Schwarzen und jüdischen Frauen in Deutschland*, eds. Cathy Gelbin, Kader Konuk, and Peggy Piesche (Königstein/Taunus: Ulrike Helmer, 1999), 175.
13. For a detailed discussion of Somuncu's work as representative of transnational political satire, see Kathrin Bower, "Serdar Somuncu: Reframing Integration through a Transnational Politics of Satire," *The German Quarterly* 85, no. 2 (2012): 193–213.

14. Erol Boran, "Faces of Contemporary Turkish German Kabarett," *Text & Presentation*, 2004, Volume 1, The Comparative Drama Conference Series (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2005), 182.
15. Popular German comedians have become a huge market, both on television and as ticket magnets for live shows. During his 2012 *Wilde Kreatürken* tour, Ceylan filled the Frankfurt Commerzbank arena to capacity at 55,000 seats, but not enough to beat the world record set by Mario Barth in 2008 when he performed for 70,000 spectators in Berlin's Olympia stadium. Such "comedy" performances are now extravagant events, including pre-shows, intermission acts and complex lighting, sound and special effects requiring numerous technicians.
16. Bülent Ceylan's heavy metal credentials were reinforced when he was invited to perform at the Wacken Open Air festival in 2011, the first comedian ever to be included in the program lineup.
17. See Boran, "Faces," 182 and Helga Kotthoff, Shrpesa Jashari and Darja Klingenberg, *Komik (in der Migrationsgesellschaft)* (Munich: UVK, 2013), 67.
18. Deniz Göktürk, "Strangers in Disguise: Role-Play beyond Identity Politics in Anarchic Film Comedy" *New German Critique* 92 (Spring-Summer 2004): 103.
19. Göktürk, "Strangers," 120.
20. Göktürk, "Strangers," 121.
21. Göktürk, "Strangers," 121.
22. Kotthoff, "Jede Minderheit hat ein Recht auf Diskriminierung,' Sprachliche und soziale Verhältnisse in der transkulturellen Alltags- und Medienkomik," in *Komik*, 63.
23. Boran, "Eine Geschichte des türkisch-deutschen Theaters und Kabarets," (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2004), 287.
24. Christiane Schlöte, "'The sketch's the thing wherein we'll catch the conscience of the audience': Strategies and pitfalls of ethnic TV comedies in Britain, the United States, and Germany," in *Cheeky Fictions: Laughter and the Postcolonial*, eds. Susanne Reichl and Mark Stein (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 184.
25. Schlöte, "The sketch," 184.
26. Katrin Sieg, *Ethnic Drag: Performing Race, Nation, Sexuality in West Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 11.
27. Kader Konuk, "'Identitätssuche ist ein [sic] private archäologische Graberei.' Emine Sevgi Özdamars inszeniertes Sprechen," in *AufBrüche*, eds. Gelbin, Konuk, and Piesche, 72.
28. Sieg, *Ethnic Drag*, 27.
29. cf. Sieg, *Ethnic Drag*, 227.
30. Sieg, *Ethnic Drag*, 228.
31. *Kanak* or *Kanake* is a pejorative term most frequently directed at Turkish migrants in Germany. It was reappropriated by Feridun Zaimoğlu and others to designate a street-wise, aggressive, and critical perspective on Germany's multicultural aspirations and inhibitions.
32. Sabine Pahlke-Grygier, "What you lookin' at?" <http://en.qantara.de/What-you-lookin-at/8469c177/index.html>; See also Jordan Bonfante, "Whaddaya looking at?" <http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2047469,00.html>.
33. In his live shows, Yanar portrays ethnic Germans in a similar fashion, evoking their pedantic arrogance by wagging his finger and speaking in a strained, uptight tone of voice.
34. Kaya Yanar, *Was guckst Du?! Best of Staffel 1–4* (Hamburg: WVG Medien, 2004) DVD.
35. Bülent Ceylan, interview, *Halb getürkt* (Cologne: WortArt, 2006) DVD.
36. Ceylan, *Halb getürkt*.
37. Ceylan, *Halb getürkt*.
38. Yanar, *Live und unzensiert* (Sony Music Entertainment, 2009) DVD.
39. One example is the song "Gleicher als Gleiche" from *Ganz schön turbulent* with the refrain "Wir sind alle nur die Bülents und Freunde sowieso" (We are only Bülents one and all and friends in any case). *Ganz schön turbulent* (Cologne: WortArt, 2010) CD: track 12.
40. Graeme Dunphy and Rainer Emig, eds. *Hybrid Humour: Comedy in Transcultural Perspectives* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010), 9.

41. Dunphy and Emig, introduction to *Hybrid Humour*, 22.
42. Maha El Hissy, *Getürkte Türken. Karnevaleske Stilmittel im Theater, Kabarett und Film deutsch-türkischer Künstlerinnen und Künstler* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2012), 9–10.
43. Dunphy, “Cold Turkey: Domesticating and Demythologising the Exotic in German Satires of Sinasi Dikmen, Muhsin Omurca and Django Asül,” in *Hybrid Humour*, eds. Dunphy and Emig, 155.
44. Yanar, *Made in Germany* (Sony BMG, 2008) DVD.
45. Interview with Christoph Krachten, “Bülent Ceylan: sein peinlichstes Erlebnis,” *Clixoom* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&v=QBt5pGFUY4Y&feature=fvwp>.
46. Nevrez Caliskan lives in Duisburg and speaks fluent German in addition to Turkish and has been an Elvis impersonator since he was twenty. Until he reached age forty, he primarily performed Elvis songs in English, but as he got older he developed a Turkish repertoire in order to develop new markets for his impersonation routines. For an interview with Caliskan on WDR see YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqDURx17IB4>.
47. Naidoo’s heritage is a mix of German, South African, Indian, and Arab.
48. *Die Bülent Ceylan Show: Staffel 2* (Brainpool TV, 2013) DVD.
49. Ceylan, *Halb getürkt*.
50. Sieg, *Ethnic Drag*, 115.
51. Sieg, *Ethnic Drag*, 117.
52. Krachten, “Bülent Ceylan.”
53. Ceylan, *Kebabbel net* (Cologne: WortArt, 2008) CD, Track 7.
54. Ceylan, *Kebabbel net*, Track 7.
55. Katrin Sieg notes in *Ethnic Drag* that Saxonian is “a stock dialect for the fool in German and Austrian comedy” (96). Although Sieg provides no support for this claim, characters with a Saxonian accent often appear as rubes in postunification German cinema: *Go Trabi Go* (1991) and *Sonnenallee* (1999) are just two examples.
56. Ceylan, *Kebabbel net* Track 7.
57. Ceylan, *Kebabbel net* Track 7.
58. Mittelmeier and other West German comedians focus more on matters of taste in their “Ossi” jokes that derive from socioeconomic or class bias. Ilka Bessin, an East German comedian who skyrocketed to fame as Cindy from Marzahn, uses this class bias as the foundation for her comic persona, a Hartz IV white trash queen from the tenements of eastern Berlin.
59. Alexander Kühn, “Buntes Deutschland,” *Der Spiegel* 21 (2012), <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-85833420.html>.
60. Katja Hanke, “Dialects in Popular Culture,” <http://www.goethe.de/ges/spa/sui/en6250720.htm>.
61. Ceylan, *Bülent Ceylan live!*
62. El Hissy, *Getürkte Türken*, 190.
63. El Hissy, *Getürkte Türken*, 191.
64. Kotthoff, “Jede Minderheit,” 69.
65. Yanar, *Made in Germany* DVD.
66. Yanar, *Made in Germany* (Munich: Wilhelm Heyne, 2011).
67. *Die Bülent Ceylan Show: Staffel 2*.